



WORKING FIELDS®

January Newsletter

6 Years of Reimagining Staffing

A Reflection from Mickey Wiles, CEO & Founder

Six years ago this week, after spending three months developing a business plan from my dining room table, I moved my desk, computer, bookshelf and brand-new printer into a small office in a co-working space in downtown Burlington. I saw an opportunity to do something that would be meaningful, fulfilling and draw upon my life experiences. Good, bad and otherwise.

One of those experiences came from being in long-term recovery. At the start of my recovery, after several years of struggles, I found the journey difficult, even with the support of my family, employer and community. I also recognized that there are many people who have not had those resources and have faced greater struggles than I have due to their circumstances. I found that their chances of success are vastly improved with support, access to services, and employment.

As I pondered what I could do to create something meaningful, I thought of how vital employment is to the solution. To find employment with a background stigmatized by society is difficult. To do it alone is even more challenging.

I started with the assumption that employers can be part of the solution. By giving individuals a chance, employers can help them succeed while also making a good business decision. Leaning on my experience with peer coaching and my 35 years in business, I found the winning formula: A mission-driven staffing agency that could work like any other staffing agency, while also offering a value-added service of individualized support using a coaching model.

On January 2, 2017, I took the leap. After three months laying the groundwork and hiring our first account manager, Working Fields made our first placement with a small cleaning company named Northland Janitorial. Within a month we had more. Rhino Foods was our second client and Casella Waste was our third.

We found that not only did the model work, but that we were the only organization delivering these types of services. We continue to learn and to develop the model. We discovered what types of support benefit people the most and learned how to match people, based on where they were at, with the right jobs.

Fast forward to today, six years later, and we have five offices, several account managers and a diverse team of peer coaches. Our team is successful because of the passion and lived experiences we bring to Working Fields.

We have worked with many employers to help them understand what fair chance hiring is all about. We have addressed stigma in the workplace across myriad situations and overcome that roadblock while deepening relationships.

If you are an employer, and you are reading this, I ask: What more can you do? Do you offer trainings? Have you assessed your hiring methods? Do you consider bringing in people through Working Fields as a strategy to build your workforce, help reduce stigma in your workplace and be part of the solution that impacts everyone in the community? If you do, thank you; if not, then I ask you to consider this, and you will not regret it.



Stuart "Mickey" Wiles, Founder and CEO

Celebrating Last Year's Wins

2022 HIGHLIGHTS



520

jobseekers referred

297

placements made

50

full-time conversions



New Areas Served

Entry into MA via the acquisition of Harmon Personnel staffing agency
Expansion into NH Seacoast



35 New Clients



ASA LCC NHBSR

National Staffing Employee All-Star: Lisa G.
Workforce Innovation Award Winner
Sustainability Slam Winner



From everyone at Working Fields, thank you for supporting us.

Working Fields Expands into Massachusetts

Working Fields wrapped up 2022 in a big way with the acquisition of Harmon Personnel Services, an alternative staffing agency located in the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts, just over the border from Brattleboro, VT.

Both organizations are excited for a smooth transition as Working Fields brings our peer support model to Harmon's staff, temporary employees, and clients.

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VTDigger Features Working Fields Associates

Orlando hopped off a bus from Las Vegas with no local connections. Anne wanted to rebuild her career after life took her in an unexpected direction. Lisa felt stuck in a dead-end job because of her past.

Now, they are all gainfully employed, Lisa won a national award, and Orlando is taking classes outside of work. These are three of the people whose stories give meaning to the mission of Working Fields.

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Working Fields is a mission-driven staffing agency. We help individuals build the lives they want through peer support and job opportunities. By addressing systemic barriers to employment — such as transportation, housing, convictions, or substance use disorder — our people-first approach enables employers to hire from a larger pool of talented candidates.

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